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Remembering 'ohana lost in war

 Photo gallery: [State Medal of Honor Ceremony](#)

By [Kim Fassler](#)
Advertiser Staff Writer

Army Spc. Tyler R. Seideman was less than three weeks from celebrating his 21st birthday when the Black Hawk helicopter carrying him and nine other Schofield Barracks soldiers crashed in northern Iraq on Aug. 22, 2007, killing everyone aboard.

The Lincoln, Ark., native was among 31 fallen service members with Hawai'i ties whose memories were honored yesterday at the annual Hawaii Medal of Honor presentation at the state Capitol.

Seideman served in the Army's 2nd Battalion, 35th Infantry Regiment. His mother, Lee Ann, wore a purple orchid lei yesterday as she rose to accept her son's medal before Gov. Linda Lingle, Hawai'i Adjutant General Robert G.F. Lee, state legislators, representatives from Hawai'i's congressional delegation, servicemen and hundreds of others in the House of Representatives chamber.

"You couldn't ask for a more tenderhearted, generous ... and loving person," Lee Ann Seideman said after the ceremony, her eyes wet.

The state Medal of Honor presentation, now in its third year, honors members of the U.S. armed forces, U.S. military reserves and Hawai'i National Guard who were Hawai'i residents, attended a Hawai'i school or who were stationed in the Islands.

Lee Ann Seideman arrived in Honolulu from Arkansas on Monday. She said she is still trying to adjust to Hawai'i time and lay awake at 2:30 a.m. yesterday remembering Tyler.

She tried to put her son's death in perspective, thinking of her grandmother, who lost two sons in World War II.

"I know I haven't sacrificed much," she said. "But it feels like the world to me because he was my best friend."

Hawai'i's Medal of Honor was the first state award of its kind in the nation and served as a model for similar ceremonies in other states. The medal is engraved with taro leaves, which represent 'ohana.

As of Jan. 31, Hawai'i had lost 217 service members.

Of the 31 people honored yesterday, family members of 20 of them were present to accept the award. They came from as far away as Wisconsin and New York.

Amber Schoolcraft, 21, accepted the medal on behalf of her late husband, 26-year-old Army Spc. Jon Michael "Mike" Schoolcraft III of Wapakoneta, Ohio. He was killed Jan. 19 when his Stryker vehicle was struck by a roadside bomb in Taji, Iraq, about 20 miles north of Baghdad.

The two met when Amber was working at a daycare center in Honolulu and Mike was stationed with the 1st Battalion, 27th Infantry Regiment at Schofield.

She described him as an adventurous person, who once encouraged her dad to leap from the "jump rock" into the ocean at Waimea Bay.



Army Capt. Christopher Almaguer, left, and other military and civilian guests stand for the fallen at the Hawaii Medal of Honor ceremony.

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"It was a really, really nice ceremony," Schoolcraft said.

Julie and Mike Tulang flew in from Hilo to accept the medal for their son, Navy Lt. Cmdr. Morgan C. Tulang. Tulang, 36, was assigned to a U.S. Central Command distribution operations center and died in Kuwait on March 1, 2007.

"Morgan had a passion for life, a passion for reading and a passion for adventure," Julie Tulang said. "He loved the Navy."

The Tulangs are compiling Morgan's letters, through which he shared tales of adventures from abroad. The stories include Morgan's account of hiking down Mount Fuji wearing only his socks.

They will add the scrapbook to a collection of items marking their son's other achievements: his high school diploma, academic awards and merit badges from his Boy Scout and Eagle Scout days.

"Today I was sitting there thinking, 'Here's another honor he's bestowing on us,' " Julie Tulang said.

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MEDAL RECIPIENTS

Here is a list of service members with Island ties who were honored yesterday with the Hawaii Medal of Honor:

Air Force Airman 1st Class
Carl Jerome Ware Jr.

Navy Lt. Cmdr.
Morgan C. Tulang

Army Sgt. Forrest D. Cauthorn

Army Pfc. Jay S. Cajimat

Marine Corps Maj.
Douglas A. Zembiec

Army Cpl. Casey P. Zylman

Army 1st Lt. Keith N. Heidtman

Army Chief Warrant Officer 2
Theodore U. Church

Army Sgt. Richard V. Correa

Air Force Senior Airman
William N. Newman

Army Spc. Farid Elazzouzi

Army Sgt. Derek T. Roberts

Army Spc. Val J. Borm

Army 1st Lt. Frank B. Walkup IV

Army Sgt. Michael J. Montpetit

Marine Corps Lance Cpl.
Robert A. Lynch

Army Spc. Tyler R. Seideman

Army Spc. Jessy G. Pollard

Army Spc. Michael A. Hook

Army Cpl. Nathan C. Hubbard

Army Cpl. Joshua S. Harmon

Army Cpl. Phillip J. Brodnick

Army Cpl. Jeremy P. Bouffard

Army Sgt. Garrett I. McLead

Army Staff Sgt. Jason L. Paton

Army Capt. Derek A. Dobogai

Army Sgt. Alexander U.
Gagalac

Navy Hospital Corpsman 3rd
Class Mark R. Cannon

Army Pfc. Casey P. Mason

Navy Petty Officer 1st Class
Victor W. Jeffries

Army Spc. Jon M. Schoolcraft
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